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International

“COMMUNITY SERVICES TO VULNERABLE GROUPS”
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QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT
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Component III “Expanding Participation of People with Disabilities”

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I. PROJECT GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The number of persons with disabilities (PWD) in Belarus exceeds 500,000. There are 119,000 children with special needs, including about 30,000 children with disabilities among them. Discrimination and marginalization of adults and young people with disabilities is a typical social phenomenon for Belarus - while adults are often excluded from social and economic life and decision-making practices, children with disabilities suffer from insufficient access to education and appropriate quality of services as well as social exclusion and lack of participation opportunities.

From October 2008 – September 2012, ChildFund Belarus implemented the four-year project “Expanding Participation of People with Disabilities” funded by USAID in Belarus under the “Community Services to Vulnerable Groups” cooperative agreement (AID-121-A-00-05-00703). The project component aimed to include Belarusian people with disabilities into mainstream society and to strengthen the capacity of organizations of persons with disabilities.

In October 2012, ChildFund Belarus entered the next three-year project phase. The People with Disabilities Component aims to increase the integration of PWD through the development of innovative services and strengthening the capacity of grassroots PWD organizations.

The project has three main objectives:

- Build the organizational, networking and advocacy capacity of grassroots organizations supporting PWD and their families;
- Support advocacy efforts by PWD grassroots organizations to promote inclusion;
- Support the introduction and development of inclusive education of children and young people with disabilities.

II. PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

This quarter, ChildFund focused its efforts on final evaluation, analysis of the project achievements and lessons learned, as well as additional efforts ensuring long-term sustainability of the introduced changes. The project team identified the most sustainable approaches and interventions. They were 1) improving NGO networking and cooperation; 2) strengthening the capacity of educational entities providing training and re-training for teachers, school leaders and ECD specialists; and 3) further development of inclusive approaches in pilot communities (Baranovichi, Smorgon, Zhodino, Mozyr and Mogilev).

Strengthening NGO networking and advocacy in promoting inclusion of children with disabilities

This quarter, the project supported a series of NGO working meetings aimed to further improve their networking and cooperation in the area of inclusive education. During the meetings, leading NGOs identified their roles and priorities in promoting inclusive education and included these in their working plan. Along with activities for NGO networking, cooperation and advocacy, the working plan included partnerships with mass media and local authorities. The three-year working plan was developed into a concept paper that was submitted on behalf of the NGO consortium for European Union (EU) funding in February. It is expected that the EU provides its feedback by mid-April.

The process of Concept paper development became a unique collaboration opportunity for participating NGOs and a new networking experience in itself.

Further development of inclusive approaches in pilot communities (Baranovich, Zhodino and Mozyr)

Three meetings were organized in the pilot sites of Mozyr (March 27, 2015), Baranovich (March 30) and Zhodino (March 31). During the meetings, the community working groups (comprised of parents, specialists and trainers on inclusive education) mastered new skills on results-oriented planning through discussions of planning basics, needs assessments focused on environments and resources and development SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely) objectives. ChildFund specialists prepared the methodology for the meetings and assisted community working groups during the process. The meetings helped the community working groups start the planning process and develop draft plans for the further development of inclusive education in the pilot communities. It is expected that partner communities will finalize the plans by mid-May 2015 and submit them for approval to the local Departments of Education.

Development of Concept Paper on Inclusive Education

The community-based efforts to promote inclusive education were supported by advocacy efforts on the national level. Following the results and decisions from the NGO Roundtable discussion on the Concept Paper on Inclusive Education conducted within the project, ChildFund met with the Ministry of Education to promote the idea of the creation of an inter-sectoral working group that will work on further development of the Concept paper on Inclusive Education. After the meeting and by the request of the Ministry of Education, ChildFund provided a series of suggestions for inclusion in the Concept paper. In March, the Ministry of Education issued its official decision about the creation of the inter-sectoral working group on inclusive education. The group is comprised of representatives of the Ministry of Education, special education teachers, university faculty members and two NGOs (ChildFund and its partner NGO Special World).

Strengthening the capacity of educational entities to provide training and re-training for teachers, school leaders and ECD specialists

A TOT training on Inclusive Education was conducted to expand the national training team on inclusive education. The training group consisted of faculty of all **seven** universities in Belarus. It is expected that they will incorporate inclusive education into university curriculum for future teachers. Next quarter, a working group on curriculum development will be organized by ChildFund to support their efforts.

Trainers of the national training team on inclusive education continued their work and conducted **10 trainings** to various audiences: children, education specialists, and education authorities. ChildFund finalized the publication of a “**Trainers Manual on Inclusive Education**”. The manual was developed by the ChildFund trainers that included practitioners, academics, NGOs that work with children with disabilities and their parents.

In total:

- **Ten (10)** capacity building events were conducted.
- **179 specialists** from different regions and organizations were trained on inclusive education.
- **67 parents** were sensitized about inclusion.

- **50 children** participated in trainings on inclusion.
- **21 specialists** were trained as national trainers on inclusive education.
- **One** trainers manual was published.
- **Two** networking meetings with NGOs were conducted.
- **Three working group meetings** with stakeholders of the pilot sites were conducted.
- **Six advocacy efforts** were initiated by ChildFund (1 advocacy effort) and partner NGOs (5 advocacy efforts).

III. CHALLENGES/ CONSTRAINTS/OPPORTUNITIES

- This quarter, ChildFund Belarus participated in an external program evaluation arranged by USAID. It was a good opportunity to reflect on and assess 10 years of project experiences.

IV. SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

OBJECTIVE 1: BUILD THE ORGANIZATIONAL, NETWORKING AND ADVOCACY CAPACITY OF GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING PWD AND THEIR FAMILIES

In total:

- **Two** networking meetings with NGOs were conducted.
- **Three working groups** meetings with stakeholders of the pilot sites were conducted.
- **Ten (10)** capacity-building events were conducted.
- **179 specialists** from different regions and organizations were trained on inclusive education.
- **67 parents** were sensitized about inclusion.
- **50 children** participated in trainings on inclusion.

NGO Networking: Two meetings for promotion of Inclusive Education	
<i>Expected results</i>	<i>Actual results achieved</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two one-day meetings on networking with partner NGOs aimed at building the NGO Advocacy Alliance for Inclusive Education • Partner NGOs identified their roles and priorities in the development of inclusion of children with disabilities. • NGO cooperation enhanced. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two one-day working meetings were organized with four leading NGOs aimed at strengthening NGO networking and advocacy for the promotion of inclusion. The participants identified their roles and priorities in the development of inclusion of children and youth with disabilities, discussed opportunities for collaboration and defined a common approach to advocacy. As a result of these efforts, the participants decided to submit a Concept Paper to the EU. The idea of the Concept Paper is to support networking efforts of NGOs in promoting inclusive education in Belarus. • The NGOs pooled their organizations' writing resources and carefully coordinated the group work of drafting a Concept Paper. The concept paper development

	process provided a unique collaboration opportunity for participating NGOs and became a networking experience in itself. The Concept Paper was submitted for funding to the EU in February 2015.
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<i>Technical support to further development of inclusive education in the pilot sites</i>	
<i>Expected results</i>	<i>Actual results achieved</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings with local habilitation centers, Departments of Education and local parent association are organized in pilot sites (Smorgon, Zhodino, Baranovichi, Mogilev, and Mozyr) • 100% of communities developed their plans for further development of inclusive education in their communities** 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three meetings were organized in the pilot sites of Mozyr (March 27), Baranovichi (March 30) and Zhodino (March 31). • Community working groups mastered new skills of results-oriented planning through discussions of planning basics, needs assessments of environments and resources and developing SMART objectives. The meetings helped to start the planning process and closed with the agreements between the parties to finalize the plans by mid-May 2015. • The draft plans for further development of inclusive education were elaborated in three communities
<p>*The communities of Smorgon and Mogilev will be visited next quarter according to AIP.</p> <p>** The blueprint version of the plans for further development of inclusive education in their communities will be shared with ChildFund by mid-May and presented to the local Department of Education for approval.</p>	

Capacity building of local specialists by National Trainers Team

This quarter, the National Trainers Team on Inclusive Education demonstrated the growth of local leadership. They organized **8 trainings** that targeted all the major groups of stakeholders (specialists, education authorities, parents and children) from **66 organizations** from different regions of Belarus.

- 1) Trainer Marina Letoshko, conducted a series of trainings for Gomel School #5 teaching staff and its administration personnel on February 6 and February 18, 2015. **27 school teachers** and **5 administration staff** were sensitized about inclusion and trained on methods for developing a learning environment that benefits all students, with and without disabilities. The Ministry of Education awarded Gomel School #5 with the status of experimental project for the 2014-2017 'Piloting the model of inclusive education in school' project.
- 2) Anzhela Kozlovskaya, an alumna of ChildFund's course on Inclusive Education for education authorities, continued to enhance the capacity of education specialists in Mozyr. On February 24, 2015, she organized a training for **37** principals and vice-principals of primary schools and kindergartens representing **37** organizations from Mozyr rayon. The training was based on the modules developed by

ChildFund and highlighted the experience of Mozyr School #10, ChildFund's sub-grantee on inclusive education in 2013-14.

- 3) Anzhela Kozlovskaya also engaged **36 parents** of children with and without disabilities in a special workshop on how to teach children to accept and respect diversity.
- 4) On March 24, trainers Irina Logvin and Marina Bylino conducted a workshop for **8 specialists** and **11 parents** representing **8 organizations** from **7** geographic locations. The workshop was based on a training program on inclusive education developed by ChildFund. The mixed group of participants benefitted from the discussion on how parents and the education system can work together to support children with disabilities, how to make their everyday life inclusive, and what to do in order to break down public stereotypes.
- 5) On March 12, trainers Olga Svetlakova and Elena Lemekh conducted a training 'Inclusive education: Approaches to promotion' for **20** administrators and education specialists from **19 organizations** of Dzerzhinsk town and Dzerzhinsk rayon.
- 6) On March 19-20, trainers Olga Svetlakova and Marina Bylino organized a workshop 'Inclusive education: Trends and perspective development' that was based on a training program developed by ChildFund. The workshop targeted **39** education specialists from **22** organizations of Minsk oblast. The participants represented education institutions that were selected by the Ministry of Education as pilots for inclusion development in their communities. All expenses were covered through community-allocated resources, in partnership with the Belarusian State Pedagogic University and the Minsk City Retraining Institute.
- 7) On February 14, Vera Khitriuk and Tatyana Yakovleva, members of National Trainers Team on inclusive education and representatives of Baranovichi State University and the NGO 'Children. Autism. Parents.', respectively, joined their resources to organize a discussion of the documentary on autism 'Anton is here, close'. **20 parents** and **30 specialists** developed awareness for specific challenges people with autism and their families face and possible strategies for overcoming these challenges. The discussion was also a valuable experience for specialists to learn about using movies as an educational tool for inclusive education.

Teaching Children about Inclusion

- 8-9) From February 12-13, trainer Marina Letoshko organized two workshops 'We are different, we are equal' for a mixed group of **27 children** with and without disabilities from Gomel School #5 and children that are served by Gomel Habilitation Center for Children with Disabilities. The workshops encouraged children to find commonalities like hobbies and interests between themselves and children with disabilities. In addition, children learned about the harm of labeling and the advantages of playing and living together.
- 10) On March 25, trainer Olga Svetlakova conducted a workshop on inclusive education for **23 teenagers** from Minsk schools at the Conference of the National Library "Science Forward". The workshop was based on a training program developed by ChildFund. The workshop taught teenagers about diversity and trained them to be open-minded about people who look, act or think differently.

OBJECTIVE 2: SUPPORT ADVOCACY EFFORTS BY PWD GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS TO PROMOTE INCLUSION

In total:

- **6 advocacy efforts** were initiated by ChildFund (1 advocacy effort) and partner NGOs (5 advocacy efforts)
- **5 official decisions** on inclusive education were made

Creation of the regulative basis on Inclusive Education

Following the Roundtable discussion on the Concept Paper on Inclusive Education organized by ChildFund (January 2015), a number of proposals and suggestions were sent to the Ministry of Education by the NGO participants. As a result, the Ministry of Education decided to create a working expert group to edit the draft created by the Department for Special Education of the Ministry of Education. The working group is comprised of an interdisciplinary collaboration of education professionals. Two NGOs were invited to this group—ChildFund and sub-grantee NGO Special World.

Advocacy efforts by the project participants to promote inclusion

- Specialists of Kobrin Habilitation Center for Children with Disabilities, a ChildFund sub-grantee, urged the local Department of Education to open an inclusive class in Kobrin Kindergarten #14. The request was based on an analysis of young children with spinal cord disabilities in Kobrin, their educational needs and the locations of their homes. By the decision of the Kobrin Educational Department, an inclusive class will be opened in the kindergarten in September 2015. To prepare for this transformation, the kindergarten started constructing a barrier-free environment. Specialists of the Habilitation Center supported them with consultations and guidance. Since March, the mobile group of specialists that was established earlier within the previous sub-grant started regular trainings to sensitize the staff on inclusive education, aiming to prepare everyone involved (administration, teachers, children and parents) to accept young children in wheelchairs as their students/playmates.
- NGO 'Invalidy-spinalniki', an alumnus of the Organizational Development courses and a former subgrantee of ChildFund, filed a petition to the Gomel City Executive Committee and the Gomel Employment Center requesting to provide two persons with spinal disabilities with job placements. Two people with spinal disabilities were employed; Zhelezniakova Natalia and Yazvinskaya Ekaterina became employees of Gomel Oblast State Medical Commission as medical receptionists.
- The NGO 'Republic Association of People in Wheelchairs' is a long-term partner of ChildFund and a former subgrantee with a project that created a unique service 'Initial Contact'. The service provides counseling support services for people who are recently diagnosed with a disability and are in hospitals. The service has been provided in Minsk for several years. This quarter, the NGO decided to make the service accessible to PWD in Vitebsk oblast. They organized a sensitization workshop on the importance of the service. As a result of the training, a new counseling group 'Initial Contact' was created in Vitebsk.
- Then, the NGO 'Republic Association of People in Wheelchairs' conducted a series of advocacy efforts to expand the services to people who are recently diagnosed with a disability. Next, the NGO negotiated

the conditions of service provision with the chief medical officers of Vitebsk hospitals that provide medical rehabilitation to patients with spinal injuries. The service is planned to launch in May 2015.

- In January 2015, the 'Republic Association of People in Wheelchairs' sent a petition to the Ministry of Health with their suggestion to expand their service "Initial Contact" and make it accessible for PWDs in the different regions of Belarus. In February 2015, the Ministry of Health sent a letter 'On the implementation of 'Initial Contact' program' to NGO 'Republic Association of People on Wheelchairs', to all oblast Departments of Health, the State Health Committee of Minsk Executive Committee, and to all health institutions subordinate to the Ministry. The letter, signed by the Deputy Minister, requires the administration of health institutions to support the implementation of the 'Initial Contact' program for patients with spinal injury
- The NGO 'Children. Autism. Parents.', an alumnus of several of ChildFund's courses on inclusion, participated in a national contest of social initiatives with a project on developing inclusive education for children with autism. The contest and NGO's initiative were widely covered by the different mass media <http://autismschool.by/news/velkom-pomozhet-neverbalnym-detyam-zagovorit.html>; <http://startidea.by/pervaya-v-belarusi-inklyuzivnaya-shkola-dlya-detey-s-autizmom>. In addition, the NGO 'Children. Autism. Parents.' was awarded with a Social Weekend Diploma contest that translates into the support of \$1,300. The national cell phone operator Velcom decided to sponsor the development of a special communication software to be used by all the schools where children with autism study (five so far). In spite of the being a relatively young NGO—it's three-years old—it has achieved notable success in raising public awareness and in developing fundraising skills.

OBJECTIVE 3: SUPPORT INTRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

This quarter, the project focused on increasing the training capacity of education specialists. The goal was achieved through cooperation with 100% of universities that provide Teacher Education training. University faculty members were trained as national trainers on inclusive education. University staff have the advantage of regular access to students who major in Teacher Education and they also enjoy autonomy in developing and incorporating courses on inclusive education into university curriculum.

In total:

- **21 specialists** were trained as national trainers on inclusive education
- **1** trainers manual was published

<i>TOT on Inclusive Education (February 10-12 and 24-26)</i>	
<i>Expected results</i>	<i>Actual results achieved</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two three-day sessions to train a new cohort of the National Trainers Team members. • At least 17 faculties from universities and retraining institutes from across the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two three-day sessions to train a new cohort of the National Trainers Team. • 21 persons were trained: 14 university faculty representing 7 universities and the Academy of Post-graduate Training; 5 participants representing schools

country are trained as trainers on inclusive education.	that are already involved in piloting inclusive education in their community and are supported by the Ministry of Education; and 2 participants representing NGOs that work with children with disabilities and their parents.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ChildFund encouraged two persons per each institution to participate, including one teaching staff member and one administrative officer. ChildFund's experience suggests that a trained team is better fit to advocate for innovation than a single specialist. • Mixed groups of university faculty and NGOs representatives (parents of children with disabilities) provided a unique learning environment that was mutually beneficiary for both types of the participants. • University faculty members expressed their intentions to incorporate programs on inclusive education into the university curriculum. 	

Publication of training manual on Inclusive education

The publication of the '***Trainers Manual on Inclusive education***' developed by the working group of ChildFund trainers on inclusive education was finalized this quarter. The manual provides trainers with detailed instructions on each training sessions, handouts, and other resource materials.

V. COORDINATION AND COOPERATION

Coordination with USAID

Irina Mironova, ChildFund's Chief of Party, and Jahor Novikau, USAID AOR communicated regularly through meetings, e-mails, and phone calls.

On March 10, 2015, Dr. Paul M. Carter, Director for Eurasia Office of the Coordinator of US Assistance to Europe and Eurasia (EUR/ACE) visited the ChildFund Belarus Office. ChildFund provided Dr. Paul M. Carter with a project presentation and answered his questions about the project implementation strategy and outcomes.

On March 20, 2015 Anita Anastacio, Director of Child Development and Protection and Maria Redini, Senior Business Development Manager from the ChildFund International Office and Irina Mironova, ChildFund Belarus Chief of Party had a meeting with Mrs. Judith Robinson, USAID Belarus Desk Officer, and USAID program specialists at USAID Washington DC. Irina updated USAID about the project outcomes and discussed its further development.

Cooperation with ChildFund International Headquarters

ChildFund Belarus was in regular communication with ChildFund International's Headquarters in Richmond via e-mail and Skype. In March 16-19 Irina Mironova visited ChildFund IO Office in Richmond and Program Department Division in Washington DC. The external evaluation draft reports were discussed and ChildFund's comments were drafted together with IO specialists. Further plans for documentation of project experience by ChildFund IO team were discussed.

VI. PROJECT MANAGEMENT & STAFF DEVELOPMENT

ChildFund Belarus has held weekly project review meetings in Minsk to strengthen project management, performance, and integration leading to enhanced cooperation and communication between project staff.

VII. BUDGET

This quarter, the project expenses were \$50,176.25 including ICR. This represents 28% of the annual budget. The two-quarter spending reached \$90,112.21 (50% of the annual budget). The SF-425 report was submitted under separate cover by ChildFund's Headquarters.